DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 516 PS 020 315

AUTHOR Connors, Lori; And Others
TITLE Building Community Support.
INSTITUTION Massachusetts State Dept. of Education, Boston. Bureau of Early Childhood Programs.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Advocacy; *Community Action; *Early Childhood Education; Fund Raising; Guidelines; Parent Participation; *Public Support; School Community Relationship; *Young Children
IDENTIFIERS Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

This handbook is intended to help local programs build a broad base of support for young children and their families. The strategies described are designed to help early childhood practitioners develop relationships with the community that will establish long-term commitments to early childhood programs and build a foundation for additional support. The handbook is composed of five sections. After the introduction, research supporting programs for young children is summarized in the first part of the handbook. That section is followed by one on ways to build local support, including methods for cultivating support from school personnel, early childhood advisory councils, and key people in the community, such as senior citizens, church leaders, the police and fire chief, business and political leaders, and members of the medical professions. Suggested techniques include using focus groups for information sharing and developing a community-wide action plan. The fourth section discusses community advocacy strategies, such as establishing a Volunteers in Public Schools program, linking with real estate agencies, and developing a Promise the Children Action Card. Ideas for increasing parents' activity and conducting fund raising are provided. Lists of national resource organizations, publications, and early childhood organizations in Massachusetts are appended. Contains 14 references. (LB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

PS

BUREAU of
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROGRAMS

BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED341516

PS 020315

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
H. Raynolds, Jr.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Massachusetts Department of Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION

James F. Crain, Chairperson, Gloucester
Raquel Bauman, Vice Chairperson, Holden

John J. Gould, Boston
William K. Irwin, Jr., Wilmington
Anne S. Larkin, Bedford
Richard R. Rowe, Belmont
Jonathan D. Silverman, Worcester
Theodora A. Sylvester, Springfield
Frances M. Turner, South Egremont
Joan Wallace-Benjamin, Boston
Frederick A. Wang, Needham

Harold Raynolds, Jr., Commissioner of Education, Secretary

Division of School Programs

Elizabeth Twomey, Associate Commissioner
Carole Thomson, Executive Director
Elisabeth Schaefer, Director, Bureau of Early Childhood Programs

The Massachusetts Department of Education insures equal employment/educational opportunities/affirmative action regardless of race, color, creed, national origin or sex, in compliance with Title VI and Title XI, or handicap, in compliance with section 504.

Publication # 16607 3/5/91 Approved by Ric Murphy, State Purchasing Agent

This Paper Was Developed by:

Lori Connors, Early Childhood Specialist

Carol MacNeill, Inservice Training Coordinator

Elisabeth Schaefer, Director

Joyce Staples, Early Childhood Specialist

Bureau of Early Childhood Programs
Massachusetts Department of Education

With assistance from:
Alice Barton, Research Director, Bureau of Early Childhood Programs
William MacNeill, Vice President of Development, Boston College High School Mary Mindess, Chair, Massachusetts Early Childhood Advisory Council
Leonard Lubinsky, Vice Chair, Massachusetts Early Childhood Advisory Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 4

II. RESEARCH SUPPORTING PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN 3

III. HOW TO BUILD LOCAL SUPPORT 5
- School System 5
- Early Childhood Advisory Council 6
- Community 6

IV. EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY 10
- Activating Parents 11
- Fundraising 13

V. CONCLUSION 15

Appendix A NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS 16

Appendix B PUBLICATIONS RESOURCE LIST 19

Appendix C MASSACHUSETTS EARLY CHILDHOOD ORGANIZATIONS 20

Appendix D REFERENCES 21

BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this handbook, Building Community Support for Children, is to assist local programs in building a broad base of support for young children and their families. The strategies described are designed to help early childhood practitioners develop relationships with the community to establish long term commitments to early childhood programs and to build a foundation for additional support. We encourage local programs to collaborate in this effort with other programs in their community in providing a unified message about the needs of children and families.

When we support families we are also supporting communities. Families live and work in their community, therefore contributing to the community's vitality. The community represents the strengths and resources available to support families. For a community to be healthy and thrive, services which support children and families must thrive. Building support for high quality early childhood programs can only be accomplished by families, school personnel and community members working together, because no single sector can be successful in supporting families alone.

Children need the support of caring adults to nurture their growth and development. Unfortunately we are in a period of history in the United States when many children are not getting the support they need. In many families, both parents must work in order to provide adequate food and shelter for their children. In addition, there are a growing number of single parent families who must rely on only one wage to support the family. The extended family, frequently separated by physical distance, is often unable to play its traditional role in supporting young families.

High quality early childhood programs have proven to be effective in nurturing children and supporting families. However, at this time there does not appear to be adequate public support to fund the programs families need. Indeed, at a time when the needs of children and families in the Commonwealth are growing, we find ourselves at a political and economic juncture where decisions are being made to decrease services to children and families. Families increasingly do not have the resources available that will allow them to nurture "the nation's future".

In the Commonwealth, many professionals involved in programs for young children are seeing the need to provide additional services to help families grow while at the same time their programs are experiencing budget cuts. Early childhood professionals must increasingly struggle to keep their programs operating effectively. However, it appears that running effective programs is not enough to ensure funding. Unless the community is knowledgeable about the services being provided, services to children and families are in danger of being further reduced.

The mission of the Bureau of Early Childhood Programs can serve as the foundation for developing strategies to build community support. The Bureau's mission statement is as follows:

> The Bureau of Early Childhood Programs is committed to the development of high quality early childhood programs which are linked to the public educational system in communities across the Commonwealth. Quality programs are programs that include a rich mixture of children representative of their community, children with and without special needs and children from diverse cultural, economic and linguistic backgrounds.
>
> The Bureau believes that parents want to be involved in the education of their children and is committed to investigating and disseminating effective mechanisms for home-school collaboration. The Bureau is committed to working with other agencies in the Commonwealth to build a system of comprehensive services for young children and their families.

Building Community Support for Children is focused specifically on helping programs sponsored by the public schools, however the strategies suggested can be adapted for programs sponsored by a variety of agencies. We hope this handbook will be of assistance to those of you on the "front lines". Reaching out to the community and building support for your program is especially important in this period of fiscal crisis. For further information or technical assistance please contact the Bureau of Early Childhood Programs or your Regional Early Childhood Specialist.

Central Massachusetts Regional Education Center
Julienne Johnson
Beaman Street, Route 140
West Boylston, MA 01583
508-835-6266

Southeast Regional Education Center
Linda Martin 617-770-7273
David Thomas 617-770-7305
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169
617-770-7573

Western Massachusetts Regional Education Center
Joy Staples
Macek Drive
Chicopee, MA 01013
413-594-8511

II. RESEARCH SUPPORTING PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Many divergent groups are coming together to voice their concerns about children and their support for the development of programs to help children and families. A number of reports issued recently by national organizations representing business, education and private foundations have underscored the necessity of increased funding for early childhood education. (For a more extensive listing of these reports please see Appendix D.) Recommendations from three of these reports are excerpted here:

- The Committee for Economic Development, an organization dedicated to steady economic growth, issued the report Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged(1987). This report recommended that the nation continue to expand programs for three and four year old disadvantaged children until every eligible child has the opportunity to be enrolled.

- The National Association of State Boards of Education in their Report, Right from the Start(1988), recommended that early childhood (N-grade 3) units be established in elementary schools, including enhanced services to preschool children and their parents.

- The Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future, recommended in The Common Good: Social Welfare and the American Future(1989), increased funding for prenatal care, preventive health care and nutrition, early childhood development and family support services.

These reports have recognized that increased funding is needed and would allow for the development of high quality early childhood programs. High quality programs have proven to be successful in preventing school failure. For example, early intervention programs for young children with special needs have saved school districts $1,560 per pupil in the subsequent education of children with special needs. Each $1 invested in quality preschool education saves $6 because of lower costs of special education, public assistance and crime (Report of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 1988.)

Poverty and familial stress put one third of the children entering school at risk of school failure (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1988). Studies have shown early childhood programs to be effective with children at risk, children with special needs, and middle class children. Children that have attended a high quality preschool program demonstrate dramatic increases in IQ and achievement tests scores (Berrueta-Clement, et al, 1985; Consortium for Longitudinal Studies,1983; Illinois State Board of Education 1985; Irvine 1982). These cognitive gains were further strengthened by the children's positive attitudes towards classroom activities (Lazar et al., 1982).

Longitudinal studies (Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, 1983; Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984) have provided further evidence of the positive outcomes of early childhood programs. Preschool graduates did better than their peers that did not attend preschool in the following ways:

FEWER: were referred to special education
repeated a grade
got failing grades in school
arrests and antisocial behavior
incidence of absenteeism / detention
illegitimate pregnancies, drug abuse and delinquent acts

HIGHER: scores from teachers on measures of social and emotional maturity
future aspirations
employment rates
graduation rates from high school
scores on academic motivation measures
scores on measures of self esteem
participation in sports

In addition it was found that parents of preschool graduates:

had better attitudes towards their children's schooling
had higher expectations for their children's learning

Early childhood programs are no longer a choice for many families but a necessity. Families need help in caring for their young children. Approximately 66% of children under three have mothers who work full time (A Children's Defense Fund Budget FY 89). Early education, care and family functioning must be considered together when looking at their impact on children's development. High quality early childhood programs are effective in terms of child outcomes and provide support for families at a time when families are increasingly dependent on outside agencies to assist them with childrearing (Halpern, 1987).

III. HOW TO BUILD LOCAL SUPPORT

School System

The research on effective schools suggests it is critical that the superintendent, school committee members and building principals be an integral part of the advocacy efforts to support early childhood education. School administrative staff, as well as teachers, need to be informed and educated about the benefits of early childhood education and the specific advocacy efforts of the program. With increasing competition within the school system for scarce resources, e.g. funds, space, personnel, it is vital that the early childhood program be visible and viewed as important to children's future school success.

In times of fiscal restraint, administrators and school committee members experience overwhelming pressure to support a wide variety of programs. Pressure to cut funding makes it difficult for new initiatives to survive. It is critical that school administrators be consistently informed and updated about current research on the benefits of early childhood education, as well as the specifics of individual programs, in order for them to provide the necessary support and budget allocation. The techniques and strategies that are suggested in this handbook, Building Community Support for Children, need to be applied with equal attention to school personnel not directly involved in early childhood education.

Listed below are examples of techniques to cultivate the support of school personnel for early childhood education:

1. Meet with the administration and other program coordinators (i.e. drop out prevention, health education, etc.) to develop unified proposals to improve education in your community. Make a presentation to the School Committee and community groups focusing on what your program is doing for children and families and why.

2. Encourage visits to the program, particularly by key individuals in the school.

3. Offer to host meetings, such as staff, parent association or training meetings, in your early childhood classroom or center.

4. Begin a scrapbook by collecting articles from newspapers, magazines, and journals that are supportive of early childhood programs. Distribute portions of the scrapbook periodically to key people in your school. Display the scrapbook prominently in your room. Parents can also be encouraged to contribute articles to the scrapbook.

5. Participate in school building or school addition committees and voice the need for planning spaces for preschools within new or existing public school buildings.

6. Collaborate with teachers of older students to establish partners or buddies for young children. Activities can be planned for partners, e.g. reading together, preparing a holiday feast, or going on a field trip.

Early Childhood Advisory Council

From the outset, the Early Childhood Advisory Council should be the driving force behind building community support. The council is composed of various community representatives who have an acknowledged commitment to early childhood education, and their roles and relationships in the community enable them to be powerful advocates.

Once key people are identified, Advisory Council members can contact those with whom they have an established relationship in order to:

- ask questions
- explore concerns
- initiate dialogue with peers in the community
- provide correct and up-to-date information
- form subgroups to focus on specific advocacy tasks

The resources of the community can be a powerful base for the development of advocacy strategies. Strong advocacy skills are developed by knowing the community and using its strengths as resources. Well informed individuals can use the strengths of the community (e.g. strong business base, well developed volunteer network) to encourage active involvement in building support for early childhood programs. It cannot be accomplished overnight. Community change is a process which requires time to implement a well thought-out action plan for building a strong base of support. However, in this time of an expanding need for services and shrinking dollars, it becomes not a luxury, but a critical necessity to establish this base of support.

Community

Why Involve the Community

Schools are community institutions with well established structures, policies, and practices. Since community members fund the schools through state and local taxes, and many are products of the school system, they have strong opinions on how to educate children. Through the school committee, parent meetings and the press, community members have a voice in how schools are run. Therefore, any changes which affect the way this social institution operates must have community support from the outset.

When members of the community come together, they can begin to share in the vision of strong, healthy families contributing to the vitality of their community. Strong healthy families contribute to the business sector through more productive workers, to the elderly in better property values and a reduction in crime, and to the government through a decreasing demand for costly intervention programs.

How to Engage Support

Change, such as that suggested by the restructuring of schools to include preschool programs, requires vested ownership by the people involved. To become committed to an idea, community members need to feel that they have had a voice in shaping and crafting programs for young children. In order to involve people in this manner, those who wish to engineer the change must have solid knowledge in early childhood research, philosophy, and program design. Members of the community need to be able to have easy access to clear and concise information on early childhood education. Information delivered through a variety of techniques ensures flexibility in accessing information.

Who are the "Key" People

Part of building school and community support must involve the identification of key groups in the community and the leaders within these groups. Early Childhood Advisory Councils can organize a session to identify these people. Identifying key people requires a close look at the town in order to develop a profile of who lives there and to identify their roles within the town. Key people may be senior citizens, church leaders, police and fire chief, business people, club leaders (i.e. Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce), elected or appointed political leaders, social groups, academicians, farmers, ethnic groups, and members of the medical professions. It may also be necessary to look beyond the designated leaders within a group to identify other influential members of the community.

What are the Steps

Individuals with children in school have a natural interest in the well being of the schools and should be the first people targeted in sharing information on early childhood education. However, this group of community members represents just one segment of a community's membership. Adults who are senior citizens, adults without children, adults whose children have graduated, or adults whose children are not in the public school may need more information on how their tax dollars are being spent for early childhood education, as well as the benefits for them as part of the community.

Focus Groups are one way to give information about early childhood education and get information on current perceptions of early childhood education. A focus group discussion allows participants to express both positive and negative issues and concerns, and gives participants access to current information. The open process of a focus group allows a variety of people to have input in shaping early childhood education in the schools.

Focus groups may be conducted at regular meetings of various community groups, such as the Rotary Club, Women's League of Voters, or other church and business groups. These groups are often receptive to presentations which will inform their members on community concerns.

Focus Groups should be run in a comfortable and casual manner, allowing for individual sharing of opinions and feelings about early childhood education. The focus group facilitator's job is to guide the discussion by asking questions, encouraging each participant to contribute and refocusing the group when the discussion gets off target. The facilitator should be careful to refrain from offering personal opinion or advice which might defeat the purpose of the focus group in allowing unrestricted expression of opinions on early childhood education.

In developing the composition and agenda of a focus group the following questions can serve as a guide:

- Who are the acknowledged leaders in the group?
- What do they know about the benefits of early childhood education?
- What information do they need to make an informed decision?
- Who supports the change?
- Who is unsure, and what may be their motivating influence to change?
- Who is opposed, and why?

Developing the Action Plan

After identifying community members' views on early childhood education, a plan of action can be implemented to achieve the goal of school and community-wide support. An example of an action plan that can be developed based on the response of the focus groups is on the next page. Participant's views on early childhood education have been grouped into those who can be considered supporters, those opposed, and those who are undecided about the importance of early childhood education. Based on these views, goals and strategies have been suggested to involve these individuals in supporting early childhood education.

In order for the process of effecting community change to be open, it is just as important to involve those with opposing views as it is to involve those who support early childhood education. Once the issues or concerns are identified, then specific activities may be developed using data from research, legislative initiatives, and community needs. For example, a business person who successfully implemented a day care program in his/her community can be influential in allaying the concerns of other business people in your community.

ROLE	PLAN OF ACTION	GOAL
SUPPORTERS	Those identified as early childhood supporters can work within the community to: 1. Advocate for early childhood education in the public schools. 2. Influence others within the community through discussions and personal contact.	Supporters advocate for early childhood education in the public schools: Supporters will build commitment among community members for early childhood education in the public schools.
UNDECIDED	Those who are identified as undecided should be: 1. Given additional/current information. 2. Given opportunities to make site visits, or view video tapes of other communities who are successfully implementing early childhood programs. 3. Given opportunities to discuss with community advocates or peers in other communities the issues and concerns.	This constituency will be able to support early childhood education in the public schools.
OPPOSED	Those who are opposed should be: 1. Given time to express and discuss their objections with community advocates or peers in other communities. 2. Given additional/current information. 3. Provided with opportunities for site visits or viewing videotapes of other communities who are successfully implementing an early childhood program. 4. Provided with opportunities for involvement in the process through discussions and information dissemination.	This group will be given the necessary information that would allow them to make the decision to support early childhood education in the public schools. or Clarify the issues of those who continue to oppose early childhood education in order to address the issues in the community.

IV. EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY

Early Childhood advocacy means standing up for children and their needs. Advocacy is a critical mechanism for early childhood education (pre-kindergarten) to become an integral part of the mainstream of public education. As we think about building a foundation of support for early childhood education within each community, specific strategies for gaining the commitment of all segments of the community will become a part of the plan.

Even though early childhood programs are perennially stretched for time and money and beginning an advocacy project might feel overwhelming, small steps grow into significant changes. Early childhood professionals can be the catalyst for changes within individual programs but other members of the community, parents, and early childhood staff must also join together to implement these strategies.

Here are some community advocacy strategies that have worked for other early childhood programs. These ideas can be used as a jumping off point for a specific program's advocacy plan. One way to gradually increase your program's use of advocacy strategies is to target one activity for the fall and one for the spring.

IDEA 1: How Early Childhood Education Helps Our Town

A one page newsletter or poster that would profile some of the ways your school or program helps individual people in the town could be developed. Distribute the newsletter/poster at the local library, supermarket, recreation centers, and churches.

IDEA 2: Volunteers In Public Schools (VIPS)

Establish a VIPS program where business people, seniors, health agencies and other community people volunteer their time for functions within the school such as classroom helpers, classroom speakers, or health-related screening.

IDEA 3: Contact The Media

Human interest anecdotes and concrete examples of how programs really work stimulate public support. Contact your local paper to see if you can establish a "school profile column". When writing a letter to the editor, remember to pick one or two points and clarify them in three paragraphs or less. Photos often gain the attention of media people. Take advantage of National Family Week, Education Week, National Week of the Child to submit press releases to the local paper highlighting a specific aspect of your program. Contact the paper for format and submission guidelines.

IDEA 4: Lights... Camera... Action!!

Make a videotape of a typical day in your school or program which highlights the best "moments" of early childhood education. Invite local community members or just a specific community group to view the tape. Ask your local library to host a community viewing time.

IDEA 5: Education Day

Contact the mayor's office to set up a specific day when your town will recognize the importance of early childhood education. Invite the mayor and other town officials, local community members, and the press to visit the program. Distribute pledge cards which solicit simple, concrete ways for every citizen to support education (ex. donate a book, pencil or ruler in their name, give one hour of their time to the classroom).

IDEA 6: Linking with Real Estate Agencies

People buying new homes are often very interested in the quality of schools and the availability of child care in the area. Provide real estate agencies with written information, pamphlets or resource lists on the early childhood programs available in your area. Invite real estate brokers to go on a tour of some of the programs.

IDEA 7: Lunch with a Legislator

When legislators are not in session they are often available for community visits. Friday afternoons are a good time to invite local legislators for lunch and a tour of the program. Be sure to inform school administrators and the press. The media will usually print a photograph that you submit.

IDEA 8: Promise the Children Action Card

The Promise the Children Action Card was created by a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church to be used in a national project aimed at the prevention of youth-at-risk. The Action Card is a unique tool for soliciting support from community members for early childhood programs. The Action Card can easily be adapted for early childhood programs. It is modeled on the format of a bingo card, with 36 squares. The categories represent activities that individuals can commit to do to support children. The categories used by the Unitarian Church were: Keeping Abreast, Making your Donation (of time or money), Getting Involved, Deeper Involvement, Taking the Plunge, Changing the System. Examples of some of the activities listed on the card were: attending a workshop, donating food, tutoring a child, leading a seminar, and donating professional skills to a children's organization. Individuals were asked to complete any 6 of the activities. For further information contact the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee listed in Appendix A.

Activating Parents

Parents are powerful advocates for their children. Early childhood staff who actively pursue the goal of reaching and involving all parents can be successful. However, becoming an advocate is a skill that requires information and training. Early childhood professionals can nurture parents as advocates by developing a wide variety of ways for parents to participate and then actively encouraging them to do so.

The community task force advocating for children must include a strong component of parent involvement, perhaps identifying a specific subcommittee of parents. Parents of older children, as well as grandparents, can also be recruited to advocate for young children. Grandparents are expressing increasing concern for the welfare of their own grandchildren. All subgroups of parents must be encouraged to recognize that early childhood education is the place to support the growth of children, decreasing the need for more costly intervention in later years.

IDEA 1: Training Parents for Advocacy

Becoming an advocate is a developmental process which starts with knowledge of the issues affecting each individual program. Strengthening the support of the parents in the program is the first step in developing parent's advocacy skills. Parent involvement strategies such as: calling parents at home to let them know of children's successes, encouraging parents to drop in or volunteer in the classroom, setting up a toy/book lending library for parents, developing a weekly or monthly newsletter, sending an audiotape of program songs or stories home---all these strategies give parents reasons to advocate for the program. By being creative and flexible, allowing parents to be involved at their own pace, early childhood advocates can join with parents in meeting the needs of children.

IDEA 2: Lots of Letters

Early childhood advocates can draft a letter or postcard which parents can use as a sample to send to their local city councilors, school committee members, state representatives and senators. The letter would detail how the program supports families in the community and would request their support for continued funding for the program. A similar method could be a "phone call blitz" where staff write a script to be used in calling local legislators. Your program might develop a phone call tree that can be used periodically to keep parents aware of legislation and policy issues that affect the program. Advocates should provide parents with names, addresses and phone numbers of their district's representatives, senators, city councilors and school committee members.

IDEA 3: Parent Partners

Pairing parents who are interested in regularly representing your program at area organizations (such as a school board meeting, parent association or early childhood professional association) would increase parents' confidence in speaking for your program within these organizations. Parents can at first just attend and listen. As parents begin to feel more comfortable they can begin to report back to other parents in the form of a letter or telephone call. Parents may eventually choose to make a presentation at the meeting or invite organization members to visit the program.

IDEA 4: Community Connections

Almost every family is involved with at least one agency or organization within the community. These might include their place of work, church or religious affiliation, hobby club, hairdresser, health club or medical clinic. Some ways parents can make connections between these community organization and the early childhood program is by putting up art work of children from the program, establishing "picture pals" between a child and an individual from the agency or organization, staging a holiday presentation, or inviting community members to share their talents with the children.

IDEA 5: Adopt a Program....Sponsor a Child

Adoption of a program (or a child) by a grandparent or parents of older children is a very effective way to establish intergenerational links within the community. Visits to the program by the "advocate family," shared outings or field trips, or preparing a special lunch together are ways to build strong and caring relationships.

IDEA 6: Information Fair

Representatives from a variety of programs within a community or a group of communities can join together to give out information and answer questions on early childhood programs at an Early Childhood Information Fair. The library or a local business in your area might be interested in hosting an Information Fair on early childhood programs in the area.

IDEA 7: Progressive Dinner

In order to build networking and communication among individual early childhood programs some parents from a few early childhood programs in the community can organize a Progressive Dinner. Each program would prepare one course of the meal (i.e. appetizers, main entre, desert) and participants would progress from one program to the next for the appropriate course, touring each program's facility and meeting staff at each of the sites.

Fundraising

The traditional sources of support for early childhood programs (city, state and federal monies) are limited and overreliance on one source of funding can destabilize a program. To maintain the quality and progress of our programs, other sources must be sought.

Once you have built community support within a wide range of constituencies, fund raising should be one of the focuses of your advocacy campaign. This handbook, Building Community Support for Children, has provided information on how to build a groundswell of support for early childhood education. Specific fundraising activities should be integrated within the long range plans of an advocacy campaign. Remember:

1. Good public relations are essential. People respond to a mission. To do this they need to know about your program and see it as being worthy of their time and attention. What better cause can there be than the education of young children to ensure our future?

2. Part of your planning should be to determine specific needs, e.g. to acquire additional furnishings for the classroom. The needs assessment would also indicate the amount of money needed to be raised, e.g. the cost of additional furnishings will be $3,000.

3. Someone must be in charge to give direction and provide coordination. The program leaders and staff must show interest in and give support to the fundraising efforts.

4. An effective fundraising committee has members who are chosen for their skills and commitment. This group will provide effective leadership, planning and facilitation of fundraising tasks.

Strategies for Seeking Funding Support: The methods used to raise funds are determined by the capabilities and resources of the program, as well as the amount needed to be raised. For example, a two person staff would probably need to develop a strong volunteer network before attempting a fundraising effort requiring considerable time and energy.

DIRECT GIFTS can be solicited by mail, phone and personal contact. If people have been convinced through effective public awareness strategies that the mission of your program is worthwhile, they can be asked to support specific needs of the program (after first checking local and/or school policies regarding solicitation of direct gifts.) Fundraising through direct gifts requires well thought-out and thorough preparation. An important fundraising asset is an up-to-date mailing list of potential supporters. This list can be developed over a period of time from parents of children in the program, parents of children who have graduated, past contributors and volunteers.

LOCAL EDUCATION FUNDS have been established in some communities to raise money on a community-wide basis for distribution to specific programs through grant awards. In Framingham a school committee member organized the Framingham Educational Foundation to raise money from community members to boost the schools budget. In other communities charitable organizations will support a worthy cause.

EVENTS, such as a bake sale or dinner, require careful planning, organization and execution to ensure success. Collecting articles from the newspaper describing other groups' events will provide a wide variety of possible events for your organization. Consult with others who have conducted similar events for advice and potential pitfalls. Ideas should then be reviewed to see if they will provide the desired income when balanced with the time and effort required. In one community it was decided that the usual event of a children's puppet show was not bringing in enough money for the amount of effort required. The fundraising committee decided to staff a booth in the town's community fair because they could reach more people with less time and commitment from staff. If an outside fundraising organization is used, your expectations of the function and role of the organization should be clearly defined and agreed upon.

COLLABORATION can be an effective approach for fundraising if the monies needed or the event planned is beyond the capabilities of the program. Collaborating with other groups often makes your efforts more powerful and less draining on program resources. Cooperation with other groups can bring many benefits to your efforts, including an expanded work force, greater clout in your appeal, and a more significant event aimed at a wider market. For example, several public and private agencies which are involved with children can team up to hold an event.

APPRECIATION of each contributor's time, talent or money should be given equal attention in planning fundraising strategies. A note of thanks or other acknowledgement of support builds goodwill and paves the way for continued support.

V. CONCLUSION

We hope that Building Community Support for Children will be the first in a series of initiatives to help communities develop a comprehensive plan for establishing universal early childhood programs. Our plans for the future include training on how to implement some of the specific activities suggested in this handbook and developing a resource library.

Children and families need our help now. However, the 1990's call for a more concerted focus of our actions. This is a new direction for early childhood practitioners. We must join with community leaders and decision makers to address public policy issues in shaping the future of children and families by advocating for universal and accessible services that will meet the needs of the 1990's.

Good Luck!

Appendix A NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations are excellent resources for contacts, networking, and information.

Alan Guttmacher Institute
111 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10003-1089
212-254-5656

Administration for Children, Youth and Families
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013
202-755-7762

Alliance for Better Child Care
122 C ST., N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-628-8787

American Bar Association
The Legal Resource Center for Child Advocacy and Protection
1800 M St., N.W., Suite 200 South
Washington,D.C. 20036
202-331-2250

Association of Child Advocates
P.O. Box 5873
Cleveland, Ohio 44101-0873
216-881-2225

Association for Childhood Education International
11141 Georgia Ave., Suite 200
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-942-2443 or 800-423-3563

Association of Child Advocates
P.O. Box 5873
Cleveland, OH 44101-0873
216-881-2225

Association of Junior Leagues,Inc.
600 First Ave.
New York, NY 10016
212-683-1515

Center for Public Advocacy Research
12 W. 37th St.
New York,NY 10018
212-564-9220

Child Care Action Campaign
99 Hudson St., #1233
New York, NY 10013
212-334-9595

Child Care Employee Project
P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, CA 94705
415-653-9889

The Child Welfare League of America
440 First ST., N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20010
202-638-2952

The Children's Defense Fund
122 C St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-628-8787 or 800-424-9602

Committee on Economic Development
477 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
212-688-2063

Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition
1718 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-265-9090 or 800-424-4310

Council of State Governments
Iron Works Pike, P.O. Box 11910
Lexington, KY 40578
606-252-2291

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801-4877
217-333-1386

Family Resource Coalition
230 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1625
Chicago, IL 60601
312-726-4750

High/Scope Foundation
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

League of Women Voters
1730 M St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-429-1965

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20009-5786
202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460

National Black Child Development Institute
1463 Rhode Island Ave., N. W.
Washington, DC 20005
202-387-1281

National Conference of State Legislatures
444 N. Capitol St., N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20001
202-624-5400

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System
CB#8040, Suite 500 NCNB Plaza
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8040
919-962-2001

The Foundation Center
79 Fifth Avenue, Department ZQ
N.Y., N.Y. 10003
212-620-4230

U. S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families
House of Representatives, Room H2-385, House Annex 2
Washington, DC 20515
202-226-7660

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
78 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108-3497
617-742-2120

Appendix B PUBLICATIONS RESOURCE LIST

The following is a partial list of the publications available from some of the organizations listed in Appendix A. For a complete list, contact the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Child Care Information Service at 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460.

Child Care Employee Project

"Beyond just working with kids: Preparing early childhood teachers to advocate for themselves and others"
"Managing the media maze: A resource guide for child care advocates."
"Raising salaries: strategies that work."

The Children's Defense Fund

"Child care: The time is now."
"A children's defense budget: An analysis of the FY 1990 federal budget and children."
"CDF's nonpartisan voting record of 1990."
"It's time to stand up for your children."
" Where do you look? Whom do you ask? How do you know?"
"State child care fact book."
" An Advocates's Guide to Fund Raising"

League of Women Voters

"Anatomy of a hearing."
"Going to court in the public interest: A guide for community groups."
"Know your community."
"Know your county."
"Know your schools."
"Tell it to Washington."

National Association for the Education of Young Children

"Speaking out: Early Childhood Advocacy."
"Making news: An affiliate guide to working with the news media"

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System

"Resource Packet: Public Awareness"
"Public Awareness-Selected Topics"

High/Scope Foundation Press

"The Preschool Challenge"
"Lessons that Last"- a video produced in cooperation with the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Appendix C **MASSACHUSETTS EARLY CHILDHOOD ORGANIZATIONS**

Boston Association for the Education of Young Children
Ralph Hergert
520 Commonwealth Ave. Suite 416
Boston, MA 02215

Massachusetts Head Start Director's Association
Fran Collins, Chairperson
Center Inc. Agency
Cambridge Head Start Center
221 Hampshire St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Massachusetts Association of Day Care Administrators
Angela Ferrario
Associated Day Care Services
95 Berkeley St., 3rd floor
Boston, MA 02116

Massachusetts Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children
Division of Early Childhood
Eleanor Grater Lewis
130 South Street
Waltham, MA 02154

Massachusetts Association of School Age Child Care
P.O. Box 372
Reading, MA 01867
Robin D'Antona- 617-944-0044

Massachusetts Elementary School Principal's Association
85 Myrick Lane
Harvard, MA 01451
508-772-2794

Massachusetts Legislative Children's Caucus
State House Room 429
Boston, MA 02133
617-722-2116

Appendix D REFERENCES

Berrueta-Clement, J.R.; Barnett, W.S. & Weikart, D.P. (1985). Changed lives - The effects of the Perry Preschool Program on youths through age 19. In Aiken, L.H. & Kenner, B.H. (Eds.) Education Studies Review Annual. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications. 10, 257-279.

Pierson, Bronson & Tivnan (1984). A School-Based Program From Infancy to Kindergarten for Children and Their Parents. Personnel and Guidance Journal.

Casto, G. & Mastropieri, M.A. (1986). The efficacy of early intervention programs: A meta-analysis. Exceptional Children,52, 417-424.

Children's Defense Fund (1989). A Children's Defense Budget: An Analysis of Our Nation's Investment in Children. Children's Defense Fund.

Committee for Economic Development (1987). Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged. Committee for Economic Development, 477 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1983). As the Twig is Bent...Lasting Effects of Preschool Programs. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Council of Chief State School Officers (1988). Early Childhood & Family Education: Foundations for Success. Washington, DC.

Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future (1989). The Common Good: Social Welfare and the American Future. NY: The Ford Foundation.

Halpern, Robert (1987). Major social and demographic trends affecting young families: implications for early childhood care and education. Young Children. 34-40.

Illinois State Board of Education (1985). Effectiveness of Early Childhood Education Programs: A Review of Research. Springfield, IL: Department of Planning, Research & Evaluation (ED 260 825).

Irvine, D.J. (1982). Evaluation of the New York State Experimental Prekindergarten Program. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Education (ED 217 980).

Larsen, Jean & Harris,, Julia D. (1989, March). Long term effects on low-risk males and females. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference. San Francisco.

Lazar, I. & Darlington, R. (1982). Lasting Effects of Early Education: A Report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development. Serial No. 195. 47 (2-3).

National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE] (1988). Right from the Start - The Report of the NASBE Task Force on Early Childhood Education. Alexandria, VA.